35

THE STORY OF SAMUEL:

A CHILD

WHOM GOD CALLED.

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10 Story of the Liars.
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12 Story of a Queen.
13 The Child's Horoscope.
14 Story of the Red Berries.
15 The Hen and her Chickens.
16 Story of the First Brothers.
17 Story of the Great Flood.
18 The Wolf Story.
19 Shesh Acharya, the young Brahman.
20 The Pearl Merchant.

THE STORY OF SAMUEL:

A CHILD WHOM GOD CALLED.

Many many years ago there was a good woman named Hannah. She had a kind husband,

but she was very sad, because she had no son. Hannah belonged to the Jews, who worshipped the one true God. At that time the temple of the Lord was a large beautiful tent. When Hannah came to the temple to worship, she prayed earnestly for a son, vowing to give him to the Lord all the days of his life.

God heard the prayer of Hannah, and she had a little baby, whom she called Samuel. The name means "Asked of God."

Hannah did not forget her vow. She kept her little child at home till he was old enough to leave her, and then she took

him to the temple to serve the Lord there.

The chief priest of the Jews at that time was called Eli. He was a very good old man, but he had two wicked sons. Hannah gave her little boy Samuel to Eli, telling him about her vow. Samuel was only about four years old, but he was a good, loving child, and Eli was glad to have him. Hannah sang a beautiful song of praise to God, and after kissing her son, went home again. God blessed her and she had five other children.

From that time Samuel lived

with Eli in the temple, and served the Lord.

Samuel, though a great way off, was not forgotten by his father and mother. They came every year to the temple to worship, when the mother brought a little coat for her son. What a happy meeting it must have been for the child and his parent! Hannah was glad to find Samuel well and bigger than when she last saw him. But above all she was pleased to hear of his good conduct. The Bible says, "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord and also with men."

Though Eli was good himself, he did not act towards his wicked sons as he ought to have done. He spoke to them about their bad conduct, and what would happen to them; but he did not punish them, and they went on in their sin. God was displeased with Eli, and said that his two sons should die in one day.

One night, when Samuel was about twelve years old, he had lain down to sleep near Eli, who was like a father to him. It was about daybreak, just before the night lamps went out. Samuel heard a voice calling, "Samuel." Samuel thought that Eli called

him; so he answered, "Here am I"; then he ran to Eli to know what he wanted. You see what a loving child Samuel was, and how ready he was to wait upon Eli. But Eli said, "I called not, lie down again." Then Samuel went and lay down again. But soon he heard some one again call, "Samuel." So he arose and went to Eli. He thought there was no mistake this time, so he said "Here am I, for thou didst call me." Eli said, "I called not, my son; lie down again." Eli was so pleased with Samuel's readiness to help him, that this time he added, "my son."

Samuel did not know that it was the Lord who called him, for God had never before spoken to him in this way.

The Lord called Samuel for the third time, and he went as before to Eli's bedside, saying, "Here am I; for thou didst call me." Eli now knew that it was God who had called Samuel. He told Samuel to lie down again, and when he heard the voice to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Perhaps he felt a little frightened at the thought that God was going to speak to him;

but he had no need to fear. Then the Lord called again, "Samuel," and he answered "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." God told Samuel that He would bring to pass all the things that He had told Eli, because of the wickedness of his sons, and because he had not checked them.

After God had done speaking, Samuel lay in his bed, and Eli did not call him. Samuel did not like to tell Eli that God was displeased with him; but, in the morning, after Samuel had opened the doors, Eli called him, and begged him to tell him

every thing. When Eli heard what would come to pass, he meekly said, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Samuel from this time grew up to be the prophet and ruler of his people. After a useful and holy life he died at a very old age.

Although God does not call us aloud by name as he called Samuel in the temple, He is as near us, and He speaks to every one. He has spoken many times to *you*. How does God speak to us?

One way is in our hearts. When we wish to do wrong, there is something within us which tells us not to do it. This is God speaking to us. Listen to His voice. Never do what He tells you is wrong; always do what He tells you is right.

God speaks to us in His word, the Bible. What does He say? He says, "My son, give me thine heart." Love me best. Why should we do so? God is our Father in heaven. He gave us life and every thing we have. It is a great sin to turn from Him and worship idols. A good father wishes his children to do

what is right; he is grieved when their conduct is wicked. Much more is it so with God. We have all done wrong many times and deserve to be punished, but God so loved us that He gave His only Son Jesus Christ to die for us. If we trust in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and ask pardon, God will forgive all our sins, and receive us as His dear children.

Listen to God's voice as Samuel did. Try to be loving and useful as he was. There are many ways in which you can serve God and do good in the world. Thus, like Samuel, you will grow

"in favour" both with the Lord and also with men; and at death Jesus will say to you, "Come ye blessed of my Father."

REMEMBER THY CREATOR.

Remember thy Creator now,
In these thy youthful days;
He will accept thine earliest vow,
He loves thine earliest praise.

Remember thy Creator now;
Seek him while he is near:
For evil days will come, when thou
Shalt find no comfort here.

Remember thy Creator now;
His willing servant be:
Then, when thy head in death shall bow,
He will remember thee.

Almighty God! to hear thy voice,
E'en now our hearts incline;
Nor shall we e'er repent the choice
That makes us early thine.

STORIES AT ONE PIE EACH.

21 Youthful Martyrs.
22 Little Tukaram.
23 The Boy and the Queen.
24 A Little Girl in Ceylon.
25 A Golden Call.
26 Story of a Young King.
27 The Terrible Red Dwarf.
28 How to become a King's Son.
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